

Chapter 45

Partnership of Rural Tourism and Organic Farming to Achieve Goals of Green Economy: Rural Tourism and Organic Farming

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ABSTRACT

Practice has shown that the best results in solving problems that burden rural areas give mechanisms which coordinate development of agriculture with other economic activities on the principles of sustainable development. Partnership in the development of rural tourism and organic agriculture represent a logical sequence of things. People today are aware of the complex problem of burdening the global food chain and natural resources with the remains of persistent pesticides, nitrates, and the worsening of organoleptic properties and nutrient-like food. The concept of organic farming insists on the natural balance of interests. For this reason, tourists who come to the rural areas expect that they will be able to consume organically produced healthy food. The chapter analyzes the concept of rural tourism and organic farming, their dynamic development in the world and in Serbia. It points out the importance of its connectivity to eliminate existing negative trends which burden life in rural areas and possibilities to implement the goals of the green economy.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing activities in the last ten years. The UN Environment Program and UNWTO (World Tourist Organization) 2005 report that tourism is an activity that has grown by around 25 per cent in the past 10 years. It now accounts for around 10% of the world's economic activity and is

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one of the main generators of employment. However, it also has major impacts on the natural and built environments and on the wellbeing and culture of host populations. In roughly that same period, the concept of sustainable development has become widely accepted as the way to a better future.

Many authors highlight that in last few decades the concept of sustainable tourism development has become almost universally accepted as desirable and politically appropriate approach to, and goal of, tourism development (Godfrey, 1996; Hall, Roberts & Morag, 2003; etc.). UNWTO (2007) gave important role to sustainable tourism development of tourism destination. This organization insists on sustainability as key factor for successful destination management. Ritchie and Croach (2003) highlight connection between competitiveness of tourism destination and sustainability development.

Also in last few decades rise interest for organic food. Areas with protected nature is in better position for organic farming. Tourists who show interest for rural tourism, especially for ecotourism have great interest for consumption organic food during their staying in rural tourism destination.

The Republic of Serbia has great potential for development rural tourism. More than 80% of territory cover rural areas and on this area lives approximately 45% of total population. Also these areas are very good preserved. The same resources give also potentials for development organic farming.

CONCEPT OF RURAL TOURISM

Rural areas today are burdened with numerous problems (aging population, migration to urban city centers, unemployment, reduction in macroeconomic indicators, etc.). These kinds of problems are present in most countries. The tendency is to stop these negative trends and initiate in the opposite direction. A synergistic character of tourism allows connection of a large number of economic and non-economic activities and with its positive multiplicative effects gives possibility to achieve economic development of rural areas.

Until this moment, many authors and international organizations who research development of rural tourism have tried to give uniform and universally accepted definition of rural tourism, but reason that this definition doesn't exist until now, unfortunately lies in complexity of the issue. Namely, rural tourism touches two important branches of national economy – agriculture and tourism. Second important issue is that rural areas have different definition in many countries. Table 1 shows some criteria for rural settlements that use different countries.

The OECD Rural Development Programme uses a pragmatically based series of indicators:

- At the local level, a population density of 150 persons per square kilometer is the preferred criterion.
- At the regional level, geographic units are grouped by the share of their population which is rural, into the following three types:
 - Predominantly rural (> 50 per cent).
 - Significantly rural (15-50 per cent).
 - Predominantly urbanized regions (< 15 per cent).

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